

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION MARCH 29, 2010

The work session of the Council of the Town of Altavista was held in the Conference Room of the Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on March 29, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

### Council members

present: Mr. J.R. Burgess  
Mr. Ronald Coleman  
Mr. Jay Higginbotham  
Mr. Michael Mattox  
Mrs. Rayetta Webb

### Council members

absent: Mrs. Beverley Dalton  
Mr. Bill Ferguson

### Also present:

Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Town Manager  
Mr. W. Morgan Allen, Jr., Treasurer  
Mr. Dan Witt, Assistant to the Town Manager  
Mr. Phillip Bennett, Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager  
Mr. Chuck Cofflin, Water Treatment Plant Manger  
Captain Ken Walsh, Altavista Police Department  
Mr. Mark Thomas, Altavista Journal Editor

Mr. Coggsdale reviewed with Council a slide presentation of the proposed 2011 budget of \$8,713,700 with no tax or fee increases.

Mr. Mattox questioned the amount of funds being transferred in from reserves.

Mr. Coggsdale advised in the General Fund, \$380,700 and \$176,000 back into reserve; with the net being \$204,700.

Mr. Mattox also questioned the Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Coggsdale advised the transfer in from reserves is \$401,600 for a total of \$606,300.

Mr. Mattox mentioned Council is looking at a 1% increase in budgeted revenue in the General Fund. Mr. Mattox requested Council to remember in looking at the budget that money is being used from reserves and there is only a 1% increase in revenue.

Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Coggsdale to elaborate on why money had to be drawn down from the Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Coggsdale advised there is a transfer in from the General Fund to the Enterprise Fund of \$427,100. The water/sewer fund revenue is not sufficient to cover the expenses. The Utility Committee is presently reviewing.

### Administration

Mr. Mattox questioned the 2% COLA increase.

Mr. Coleman asked for the total of the salary increase.

Mr. Allen stated it would total \$50,871, which includes \$42,567 in salaries and the benefits would be \$8,304. Health insurance premiums increased 6%. Mr. Allen mentioned this is the second year in a row the premiums have increased.

Mr. Mattox stated he didn't want the employees to make less this year than last but to his knowledge there are people having to take pay cuts due to the economy and felt Council needed to come up with a compromise. Mr. Mattox stated he would be more interested in covering the healthcare for the employees than the 2% increase.

Mr. Higginbotham asked Council to be realistic and look at the present economic conditions.

Mr. Coleman stated he didn't see any rates being raised from last year. He mentioned he was willing to look for something that could be done without for another year and doesn't see basing the Town's budget on everyone else's budget.

Mr. Mattox stated 1% would be \$38,400 and if the revenue improves, he is all in favor of sharing the wealth.

Mayor Burgess felt the employees are deserving of the 2% increase.

Mr. Higginbotham reminded Council of the PCB issue and the funds needed to resolve that problem. Mr. Higginbotham felt the Town could not afford to offer a raise.

Mr. Coggsdale mentioned \$626,000 is earmarked for the PCBs remediation.

Mr. Mattox mentioned the expenditures need to be in line with the revenue.

Mr. Coleman stated the employees have helped to keep things under budget and the best way to keep a good workforce is to offer them something and felt that the workforce was very efficient. Mr. Coleman felt he could back down from 2% but felt the employees were entitled to some type of increase.

Mrs. Webb was in agreement with Mayor Burgess stating she could go with 1% but had no issue with 2%. Mrs. Webb charged Council to look elsewhere in the budget if something is to be taken away rather than from the employees of the Town.

Mr. Mattox felt Council should not dip into the reserves to balance the budget.

Mayor Burgess questioned if there was anything in the CIP that is unnecessary?

Mr. Coggsdale told Council if they are focusing on the CIP, his vehicle listed under Administration could be pushed back a year or possibly two years.

Mr. Mattox suggested cutting or looking at another way with the "want to do" items.

Mr. Higginbotham stated taking \$50,000 out of the CIP and \$50,000 out of the salary increase is a continual ratchet that goes on forever. Mr. Higginbotham stated it was unfortunate but the country is in a very bad economic situation.

Mr. Mattox asked Council to look at the Legal Services line item.

It was consensus of Council to maintain this line item at \$28,000.

Mrs. Webb questioned the Maintenance Service Contracts that increased and asked if this line item would start to diminish if the Town partnered with Campbell County on some items.

Mr. Coggsdale mentioned this might occur in the future.

Mr. Allen mentioned some items have been moved into this line item that have been in other lines such as Municipal Code Corporation, that updates the Town Code, Sysco Hardware Maintenance (an annual requirement after the upgrade of the server), Symantec Anti-Virus for the computers (an annual fee).

Mr. Higginbotham questioned the number of miles on the Town Manager's vehicle.

Mr. Coggsdale advised approximately 54,000 miles.

Mr. Coleman felt this line item should be pushed back another year.

Mr. Mattox questioned if the Town Manager would feel comfortable driving the Town vehicle 300 or 400 miles and felt that was one of his concerns with an older vehicle.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the Town vehicle was added due to the age of the vehicle.

Mrs. Webb questioned if the vehicle required much maintenance.

Mr. Coggsdale responded not much.

#### Non Departmental

Mrs. Webb suggested the Property Maintenance line item be reduced to \$50,000.

Mr. Mattox stated he feel it should be \$25,000 and if more money is needed, staff could come back and ask for it.

Council agreed to drop this line item to \$50,000.

#### Police

Mr. Mattox complimented Chief Hamilton and Captain Walsh for reducing overtime by proper scheduling of hours. Mr. Mattox also mentioned Council has yet to decide whether to move forward with accreditation of the Police Department. He stated Chief Hamilton plans to give a presentation on the value of an accreditation and whether or not this is needed. He stated he did not know if the additional administration position would work with becoming accredited. Mr. Mattox asked if Council wanted to remove this line item until a decision is made, possibly making a budget amendment later or keep the line item.

Mr. Higginbotham stated each department has decreased their budget with the Police Department increasing by 9%.

Chief Hamilton came forward and explained for the administrative position, this person would not only be responsible for the accreditation process but property clerk, grant writer administrator, assist with the criminal analysis and assist with compiling general orders. Presently, he, Captain Walsh, and Investigator Paul Smith are working in these areas, with Investigator Smith also working investigations. Chief Hamilton mentioned the manual for General Orders consist of approximately 100 general orders and the accreditation process consist of 187 standards that Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies have put together stating this is how to run a police department professionally, efficiently, and effectively. Chief Hamilton stated it usually takes 1 ½ to 2 years to become accredited. This individual would be working full time and even after that, it has to be maintained.

Mayor Burgess questioned if the Police Department needed the accreditation.

Chief Hamilton responded “yes sir, for quality efficient service.” Chief Hamilton mentioned he had spoken to someone with VML who advised in July, 2010, a 5% discount on insurance would be offered to accredited departments.

Mr. Mattox questioned if Mrs. Mary Hall would go to Office Staff in the Police Department full time.

Chief Hamilton stated she would continue to be a shared employee between Administration and the Police Department, and would be used as a back up to the property clerk.

Mr. Higginbotham stated the economy is in an enormous down turn. He stated he appreciated everything the Chief has done thus far and has heard good things about the Police Department. Mr. Higginbotham felt it was a compliment to Chief Hamilton to say things are on the right track and maybe the accreditation process could be put off another year to save the taxpayer’s funds. Once the additional person is hired, then there is more retirement benefits, group medical, etc.

Mrs. Webb stated two items of interest for her is the 5% discount on insurance and the liability issues. Mrs. Webb stated the accreditation process is not painless.

Mr. Coggsdale clarified the insurance issue stating the Police General Liability insurance coverage is not through VML. Mr. Coggsdale stated he realized the new position takes the accreditation headline but there is more involved than just this process; property clerk, grant writer administrator, criminal analysis and compiling general orders.

Mr. Mattox felt this position could not be funded until Council agrees on the accreditation process.

Chief Hamilton mentioned at his previous job, an entire unit worked on these items not one individual. The grant writer will be responsible for looking for grants also. He mentioned the importance of crime analysis.

Mr. Mattox mentioned possibly this new position can almost be paid for out of the additional grants.

Mr. Higginbotham asked if there were an efficiency gains in the Administration Department achieved by the new computer system and billing system that would allow someone else to take on additional duties. Mr. Higginbotham stated this is a good concern, great idea, but this is the wrong economic time to be adding 9% to a police budget.

Mr. Coleman stated he felt a lot of this had to do with having policies in place.

Council agreed to leave the line item in for now and discuss with full Council.

Mr. Higginbotham questioned the Subsistence and Lodging line item.

Mr. Mattox stated we want the department to set the standard for the region which means having highly trained and qualified officers.

Mr. Coggsdale noted one officer will be attending a Forensic Academy and this line also covers a Community Crime meeting which is being implemented.

Mr. Higginbotham also questioned the Conventions and Education line item.

Mr. Coggsdale mentioned this covers a portion of the Breathalyzer School.

Mr. Higginbotham questioned the increase in office supplies.

Chief Hamilton advised of a contract on a new color copier to be used for Crime Analysis reporting, charts and maps, brochures and handouts for the Community Crime meetings. This line item also covers caging for the evidence room.

Mr. Higginbotham asked about the ammunition and batteries line item.

Mr. Coggsdale mentioned this line item has been listed in other categories in the past. This includes increased weapon training.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he did not see using \$8,000 worth of ammunition and batteries and asked that this line item be reduced.

Captain Walsh indicated if someone is sent to the academy there are several thousand rounds needed per student for them to qualify through the academy. Due to conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the cost of ammunition has increased. The major issue is the cost increase. The batteries are lithium batteries which are used in the flashlights and other equipment in the office.

Mr. Higginbotham felt this line item should be \$2,000 to \$3,000 at the most.

Mrs. Webb suggested since this is a new line item to leave as is and make adjustments next year if necessary.

Mr. Higginbotham stated the purpose of the budget is to be realistic and we need some accurate figures as to what a case of ammunition cost.

Mr. Higginbotham questioned the increase in the Uniforms line item stating new uniforms should not be bought every year.

Mr. Mattox stated included in this line item is the cost of uniforms for the auxiliary officers. Mr. Mattox also mentioned Council has not approved the auxiliary officers. Until such time, that money will not be spent.

Mr. Higginbotham questioned the need to purchase two police cars.

Mr. Mattox advised Chief Hamilton's desire to keep cars with mileage under 75,000.

Chief Hamilton stated he is flexible on this matter.

Council agreed to remove one of the two patrol vehicles from the budget at a cost of \$29,000.

#### Public Works

Mr. Higginbotham questioned if the Uniforms line item could be reduced.

Mr. Tomlin replied based on his projections that line item has already been exceeded. When a new employee is hired, sitting them up in uniforms is quite expensive.

#### Waste Water Department

Mrs. Webb asked where the numbers would be plugged in for the PCBs.

Mr. Coggsdale stated if it is borrowed it will be on debt services.

Mayor Burgess stated when it comes to that point; we will seek guidance from Davenport & Company.

Mr. Higginbotham questioned why go through Davenport & Company and not Carter Bank.

Mr. Coggsdale advised an amended budget will be created.

Mr. Mattox requested to know how the 2% increase will affect the employees on healthcare.

Mr. Allen explained the insurance coverage percentages.

Council further discussed the 2% COLA adjustment for Town employees. The consensus of Council was to budget a 1% COLA requesting staff make the necessary changes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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J.R. Burgess, Mayor

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W. Morgan Allen, Jr., Clerk